

Online Research @ Cardiff

This is an Open Access document downloaded from ORCA, Cardiff University's institutional repository: <https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/92754/>

This is the author's version of a work that was submitted to / accepted for publication.

Citation for final published version:

Schmidt, Andrea, Hollering, Manuela, Han, Jiaying, Casini, Angela ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1599-9542> and Kühn, Fritz Elmar 2016. Self-assembly of highly luminescent heteronuclear coordination cages. Dalton Transactions 10.1039/C6DT02708C file

Publishers page: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1039/C6DT02708C>
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1039/C6DT02708C>>

Please note:

Changes made as a result of publishing processes such as copy-editing, formatting and page numbers may not be reflected in this version. For the definitive version of this publication, please refer to the published source. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite this paper.

This version is being made available in accordance with publisher policies.

See

<http://orca.cf.ac.uk/policies.html> for usage policies. Copyright and moral rights for publications made available in ORCA are retained by the copyright holders.



Dalton Transactions

Accepted Manuscript



This article can be cited before page numbers have been issued, to do this please use: A. Schmidt, M. Hollering, J. Han, A. Casini and F. E. Kühn, *Dalton Trans.*, 2016, DOI: 10.1039/C6DT02708C.



This is an *Accepted Manuscript*, which has been through the Royal Society of Chemistry peer review process and has been accepted for publication.

Accepted Manuscripts are published online shortly after acceptance, before technical editing, formatting and proof reading. Using this free service, authors can make their results available to the community, in citable form, before we publish the edited article. We will replace this *Accepted Manuscript* with the edited and formatted *Advance Article* as soon as it is available.

You can find more information about *Accepted Manuscripts* in the [Information for Authors](#).

Please note that technical editing may introduce minor changes to the text and/or graphics, which may alter content. The journal's standard [Terms & Conditions](#) and the [Ethical guidelines](#) still apply. In no event shall the Royal Society of Chemistry be held responsible for any errors or omissions in this *Accepted Manuscript* or any consequences arising from the use of any information it contains.

Journal Name

COMMUNICATION

Self-assembly of highly luminescent heteronuclear coordination cages

Andrea Schmidt,^{a,b} Manuela Hollering,^a Jiaying Han,^c Angela Casini^{b,c,d*} and Fritz E. Kühn^{a*}Received 00th January 20xx,
Accepted 00th January 20xx

DOI: 10.1039/x0xx00000x

www.rsc.org/

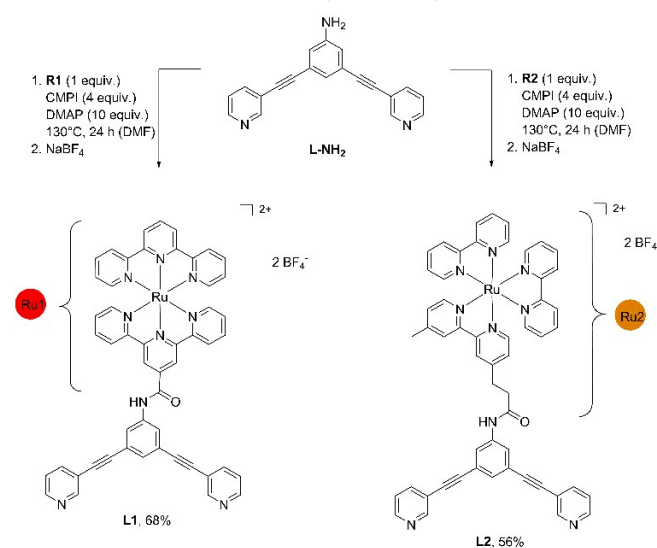
Exo-functionalized Pd₂L₄ cage compounds with attached Ru(II) pyridine complexes were prepared *via* coordination-driven self-assembly. Unlike most of the previously reported palladium(II) cages, one of these metallocages exhibits an exceptionally high quantum yield of 66%. The presented approach is promising to obtain luminescent coordination complexes for various applications.

Metal-mediated self-assembly is a useful tool to design discrete two- and three-dimensional supramolecular coordination complexes (SCCs) with precise geometries and cavities.¹ These metal-based entities have attracted much attention for a variety of applications in molecular recognition,² catalysis³ and medicinal applications⁴ due to their interesting chemical-physical properties and guest-binding abilities. Especially, the development of luminescent SCCs for potential applications in chemosensing,⁵ material science^{6,7} and biological imaging^{8,9} has gained increasing attention during the last years,¹⁰ although it is still less explored. Despite the existence of some highly fluorescent coordination complexes,^{6,11} the majority of metal-based self-assemblies are little- or non-emissive due to the quenching effect of heavy metal ions.¹²

An interesting research field of SCCs is the self-assembly of M₂L₄ (M = metal, L = ligand) cages because of their simple and highly symmetric structures.¹³ In addition, the cages' properties can be easily altered by functionalizing the ligand framework.¹⁴ Emissive properties of M₂L₄ metallocages have been discussed, yet examples of highly emissive Pd₂L₄ cages are rare.¹⁵ The

incorporation of luminescent groups, such as anthracene^{16,17} and ruthenium pyridine complexes,¹⁸ into the ligand framework resulted in palladium cages displaying low emission so far. Nevertheless, these results generate an increasing interest in tailored design of highly luminescent coordination cages. In this work, an approach is presented to increase the photo-physical properties of palladium cages by separating the luminescent tag from the emissive ligand coordinated to palladium ions. Inspired by previous investigations,¹⁷ two Pd₂L₄ cage compounds ligated by bis(pyridyl) systems coupled to ruthenium complexes were synthesized and their photo-physical properties were investigated. A comparison is made between the Ru terpyridine ligand **L1** having no spacer and the ruthenium bipyridine ligand **L2** featuring an alkyl bridge as spacer between two emissive moieties.

First, the rigid bis(pyridyl) ligands **L1** and **L2** coupled to Ru(II) terpyridine and Ru(II) bipyridine, respectively, were synthesized *via* an amide bond formation (Scheme 1).



Scheme 1 Coupling of the ligand L-NH₂ with Ru(II) complexes **R1/R2** using the reagent CMPI, followed by precipitation with NaBF₄ to obtain Ru(II)-based ligands **L1/L2**.

^a Molecular Catalysis, Catalysis Research Center and Department of Chemistry, Technische Universität München, Lichtenbergstr. 4, 85747 Garching bei München, Germany. E-mail: fritz.kuehn@ch.tum.de

^b Medicinal and Bioinorganic Chemistry, School of Chemistry, Cardiff University, Park Place, CF103AT Cardiff, UK. E-mail: casinia@cardiff.ac.uk

^c Groningen Research Institute of Pharmacy, University of Groningen, Antonius Deusinglaan 1, 9713 AV Groningen, The Netherlands

^d Institute of Advanced Study, Technische Universität München, Lichtenbergstr. 2a, 85748 Garching, Germany.

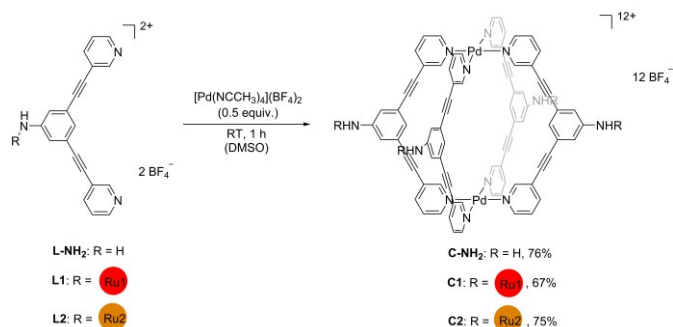
Electronic Supplementary Information (ESI) available: Experimental details, NMR spectra and crystallographic details. See DOI: 10.1039/x0xx00000x

COMMUNICATION

Journal Name

The amine-based ligand **L-NH₂** was coupled to [Ru(terpy)(terpy-4-COOH)](PF₆)₂ **R1** and [Ru(bipy)₂(bipy-4'-CH₃-4-(CH₂)₂-COOH)](PF₆)₂ **R2** using the coupling reagent 2-chloro-1-methylpyridinium iodide (CMPI) and DMAP as a base. After purification by column chromatography, the Ru(II) complexes **L1** and **L2** were precipitated by NaBF₄ in 68% yield as red solid and in 56% yield as orange solid, respectively. The complexes were characterized by ¹H, ¹³C, ¹¹B, ¹⁹F, and DOSY NMR spectroscopy, ESI-MS and X-ray crystallography (for details see ESI).

The coordination cages **C1/C2** were self-assembled by mixing the bidentate Ru(II)-based ligands **L1/L2** and the palladium precursor [Pd(NCCH₃)₄](BF₄)₂ in a 2:1 ligand:metal ratio in DMSO at room temperature for one hour (Scheme 2). Additionally, the self-assembly of the previously described cage **C-NH₂**⁸ is depicted in Scheme 2, in order to evaluate the synthesis and photo-physical properties of the cage compounds **C1** and **C2** compared to the amine-based cage. Notably, the bulky ruthenium complexes have no effect on the self-assembly reaction.



Scheme 2 Synthesis of the palladium(II) cages **C-NH₂**,⁸ **C1** and **C2** via self-assembly using the bidentate ligands **L-NH₂**, **L1** and **L2** and the precursor [Pd(NCCH₃)₄](BF₄)₂.

¹H NMR spectroscopy confirms the formation of the cage compounds. In ¹H NMR spectra (Fig. 1), the pyridyl protons H_a-H_d are significantly downfield shifted, particularly the signals of H_a and H_b experienced a shift of *ca.* 0.9 ppm. The terpyridine and bipyridine proton resonances of the attached ruthenium complexes are not influenced by the Pd-N coordination. Additional proof of the successful self-assembly in solution is given by diffusion-disordered NMR spectroscopy (DOSY), since all proton signals of the cages reveal the same diffusion coefficient. The diffusion coefficients (*D*) of the ligands **L1** and **L2** and of the cages **C1** and **C2** in acetonitrile are approximately 6.9 × 10⁻¹⁰ m² s⁻¹ and 3.3 × 10⁻¹⁰ m² s⁻¹, respectively (see Table S1, ESI). Thus, the ratios of *D*_{ligand}/*D*_{cage} are approximately 2:1, being in accordance with reported Pd₂L₄ systems.^{8,19} The hydrodynamic radii *r_s* of **C1** and **C2** have been calculated to be 1.5 nm.

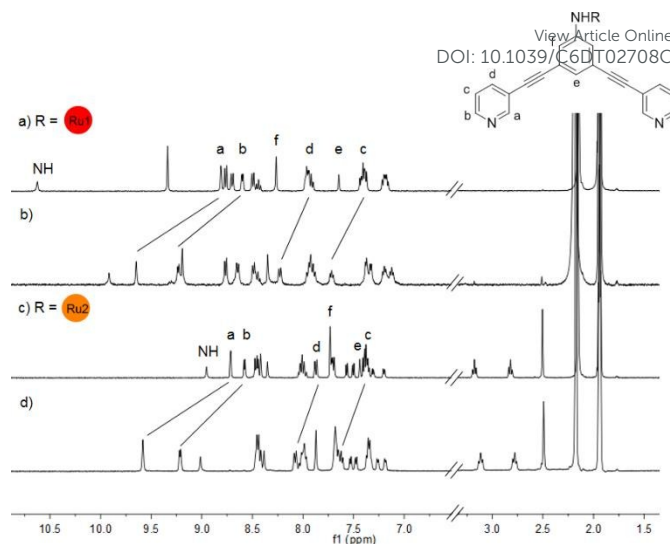


Fig. 1 Stacked ¹H NMR spectra (400 MHz, CD₃CN) of ligand **L1** (a), cage **C1** (b), ligand **L2** (c) and cage **C2** (d).

The molecular composition of the Pd₂L₄ cages **C1** and **C2** is further evidenced by ESI mass spectrometry showing isotopically resolved peaks for [C-nBF₄]ⁿ⁺ (*n* = 4-6). For example, the ESI-MS analysis of cage **C2** reveals peaks at *m/z* = 744.3, 910.6 and 1160.3, which can be assigned to [C2-6BF₄]⁶⁺, [C2-5BF₄]⁵⁺ and [C2-4BF₄]⁴⁺, respectively.

In order to predict the shape and size of the cages, a geometry optimization was performed using semi-empirical methods (PM6). Exemplarily, the molecular model of **C2** is depicted in Fig. 2. The optimized structure of **C2** exhibit a Pd...Pd distance of 1.1 nm, a distance between the opposing inner C-atoms of 1.2 nm and a span of 5.0 nm. The calculated shape and size is in agreement with previously reported Pd₂L₄ cages.^{8,17} Suitable single crystals of the metallocages for X-ray diffraction could not be obtained.

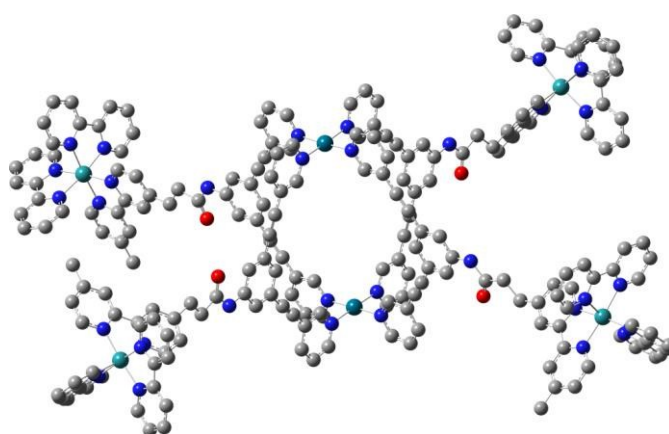


Fig. 2 Molecular model of cage **C2** (C grey, N blue, O red, Pd turquoise, Ru green).

Both palladium(II) cages are stable under air and light in solution and in solid state. The compounds are soluble in acetonitrile, DMF and DMSO.

In order to assess the photo-physical properties of the metallocages with attached ruthenium(II) moieties, UV-Vis, excitation and emission spectroscopy were carried out on the Ru(II) complexes **R1/R2**, the ligands **L1/L2/L-NH₂** and the cages **C1/C2/C-NH₂**. The absorption and emission spectra of the compounds are depicted in Fig. 3 and Fig. 4, while the photo-physical parameters are presented in Table 1.

The absorption spectra of the metallocages are dominated by strong $\pi-\pi^*$ transitions of the highly conjugated ligands showing bands in the range of 250-350 nm. The UV-Vis spectra of the cages with conjugated ruthenium complexes exhibit an additional band in the vis region, **C1** (red solution) at 495 nm and **C2** (orange solution) at 460 nm. Overall, the cage compounds feature an approximately four-times higher extinction coefficient compared to their corresponding ligands resulting from the M₂L₄ composition.

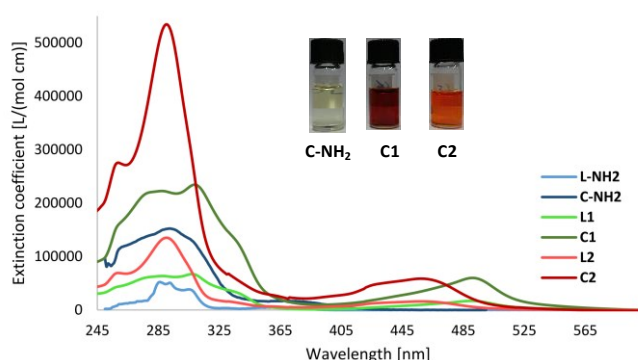


Fig. 3 UV-Vis spectra of ligands and cage compounds in DMSO ($c = 10^{-5} - 10^{-6}$ M). Insets: Photographs of DMSO solutions of the cages.

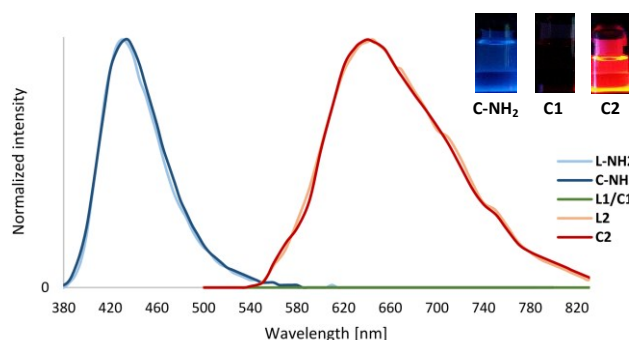


Fig. 4 Emission spectra of ligands and cage compounds in DMSO ($c = 10^{-5}$ M, $\lambda_{\text{ex}} = 260$ nm). Insets: Photographs of solutions of the cages in DMSO under UV light irradiation ($\lambda_{\text{ex}} = 365$ nm).

The metallocages reveal interesting emissive properties, showing that the luminescence can be increased or decreased by altering the molecular structure of the ligand framework. Recently, we investigated the photo-physical properties of bis(pyridyl) ligands coupled to naphthalene and anthracene

moieties *via* an amide bond.¹⁷ These systems possess less emissive properties due to a disruption of the chromophoric system in the excited state by bending the amide bond.

Table 1 Photo-physical parameters of ruthenium complexes, ligands and palladium cages (DMSO, $\lambda_{\text{ex}} = 260$ nm)

Compound	$\lambda_{\text{max}}(\text{abs})$ [nm]	ϵ_{max} [L mol ⁻¹ cm ⁻¹]	$\lambda_{\text{max}}(\text{em})$ [nm]	Φ [%]
R1	278, 317, 492	58400	--	--
R2	292, 456	79400	645	12
L-NH₂	293, 305, 360	52200	430	52
C-NH₂	293, 371	152200	435	17
L1	290, 303, 493	64600	--	--
C1	289, 311, 494	232200	--	--
L2	293, 461	134000	640	88
C2	293, 462	523900	640	66

As expected, ligand **L1** and the respective cage **C1** are not luminescent, although the amine ligand **L-NH₂** is highly emissive by itself. Notably, the red solution of **R1** is not luminescent at room temperature being in accordance with reports on similar ruthenium(II) terpyridine complexes.²⁰

To avoid the predicted torsion of the amide bond, a spacer, namely an alkyl bridge, was inserted between the bis(pyridyl) ligand and the ruthenium moiety. Upon irradiation at 260 nm, ligand **L2** emits strong orange luminescence showing a broad band in the emission spectrum at $\lambda_{\text{max}} = 640$ nm with an exceptional high quantum yield of 88%. However, by irradiation at lower energies at 460 or 495 nm the quantum yield is significantly reduced to 6 and 4%, respectively. The amine ligand **L-NH₂** shows blue fluorescence at $\lambda_{\text{max}} = 430$ nm with a quantum yield of 52%. Interestingly, cage **C2** exhibits one of the highest quantum yields ($\Phi = 66\%$) at $\lambda_{\text{max}} = 640$ nm reported for supramolecular coordination complexes.^{6,11a-b} The coordination cage **C-NH₂** features a fluorescence quantum yield of 17%. In agreement with previous reports, in both cases **C2** and **C-NH₂** the luminescence is significantly reduced by coordination of the ligand to palladium ions. Notably, cage **C2** displays a higher emission compared to the amine-based cage, while cage **C1** exhibits lower luminescence.

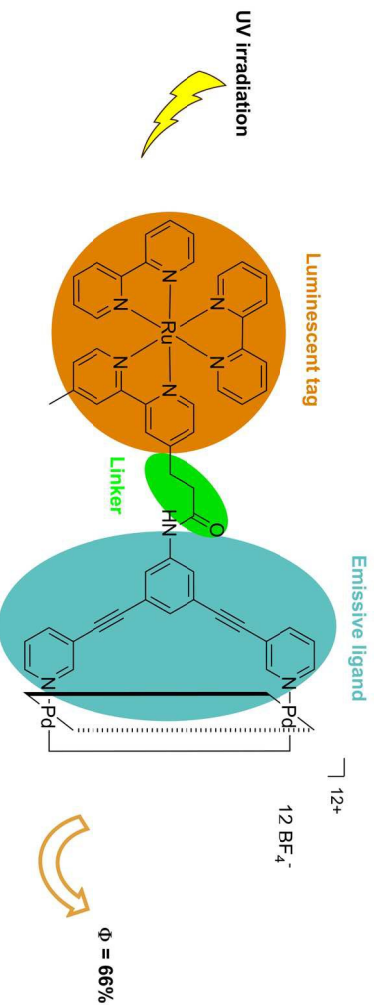
In summary, two palladium(II) coordination cages coupled to ruthenium(II) pyridine complexes *via* an amide bond have been synthesized by self-assembly. In order to obtain bright luminescence, the ruthenium complex was separated from the coordinating bis(pyridyl) ligand using an alkyl spacer. The photo-physical properties of the Pd₂L₄ cage coupled to a ruthenium complex with and without spacer were compared. Remarkably, the palladium cage without spacer is non-emissive, while the other one features a quite high quantum yield of 66%, making it one of the highest luminescent metallosupramolecular complexes known to date. The applied approach is promising to further design highly emissive metallocages for potential

applications as biological labels and chemosensors, among others.

A.S. and M.H. are grateful for the financial support of the TUM Graduate School of Chemistry. A.C. acknowledges support from Cardiff University and the August-Wilhelm Scheer Visiting Professorship at the Technical University of Munich. Authors acknowledge the support of the Technische Universität München – Institute for Advanced Study, funded by the German Excellence Initiative and the European Union Seventh Framework Program under grant agreement n° 291763. Authors thank the Chinese Scholarship Council for a PhD fellowship to J.H. Authors thank Christian Jandl for measuring the emission spectra. Dr. Alexander Pöthig's support with crystallographic data is greatly appreciated.

Notes and references

- a) H. Amouri, C. Desmarests and J. Moussa, *Chem. Rev.*, 2012, **112**, 2015–2041; b) T. R. Cook and P. J. Stang, *Chem. Rev.*, 2015, **115**, 7001–7045; c) T. R. Cook, Y.-R. Zheng and P. J. Stang, *Chem. Rev.*, 2013, **113**, 734–777;
- a) E. Persch, O. Dumele and F. Diederich, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.*, 2015, **54**, 3290–3327; b) A. M. Castilla, W. J. Ramsay and J. R. Nitschke, *Acc. Chem. Res.*, 2014, **47**, 2063–2073; c) M. Han, D. M. Engelhard and G. H. Clever, *Chem. Soc. Rev.*, 2014, **43**, 1848–1860; d) M. D. Pluth and K. N. Raymond, *Chem. Soc. Rev.*, 2007, **36**, 161–171;
- a) S. H. A. M. Leenders, R. Gramage-Doria, B. de Bruin and J. N. H. Reek, *Chem. Soc. Rev.*, 2015, **44**, 433–448; b) M. D. Pluth, R. G. Bergman and K. N. Raymond, *Acc. Chem. Res.*, 2009, **42**, 1650–1659; c) D. M. Vriezema, M. Comellas Aragonès, Elemans, Johannes A A W, Cornelissen, Jeroen J L M, A. E. Rowan and R. J. M. Nolte, *Chem. Rev.*, 2005, **105**, 1445–1489;
- a) R. Chakrabarty, P. S. Mukherjee and P. J. Stang, *Chem. Rev.*, 2011, **111**, 6810–6918; b) T. R. Cook, V. Vajpayee, M. H. Lee, P. J. Stang and K.-W. Chi, *Acc. Chem. Res.*, 2013, **46**, 2464–2474; c) H. Vardhan, M. Yusubov and F. Verpoort, *Coord. Chem. Rev.*, 2016, **306**, 171–194;
- a) A. Kumar, S.-S. Sun and A. J. Lees, *Coord. Chem. Rev.*, 2008, **252**, 922–939; b) J. A. Thomas, *Dalton Trans.*, 2011, **40**, 12005–12016;
- X. Yan, T. R. Cook, P. Wang, F. Huang and P. J. Stang, *Nat. Chem.*, 2015, **7**, 342–348.
- X. Yan, M. Wang, T. R. Cook, M. Zhang, M. L. Saha, Z. Zhou, X. Li, F. Huang and P. J. Stang, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, 2016, **138**, 4580–4588.
- A. Schmidt, V. Molano, M. Hollering, A. Pöthig, A. Casini and F. E. Kühn, *Chem. Eur. J.*, 2016, **22**, 2253–2256.
- J. Wang, C. He, P. Wu, J. Wang and C. Duan, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, 2011, **133**, 12402–12405.
- a) L. Xu, Y.-X. Wang and H.-B. Yang, *Dalton Trans.*, 2015, **44**, 867–890; b) P. Thanasekaran, C.-H. Lee and K.-L. Lu, *Coord. Chem. Rev.*, 2014, **280**, 96–175;
- a) P. D. Frischmann, V. Kunz and F. Würthner, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.*, 2015, **54**, 7285–7289; b) Z. Li, N. Kishi, K. Hasegawa, M. Akita and M. Yoshizawa, *Chem. Commun.*, 2011, **47**, 8605–8607; c) M. Wang, V. Vajpayee, S. Shanmugaraju, Y.-R. Zheng, Z. Zhao, H. Kim, P. S. Mukherjee, K.-W. Chi and P. J. Stang, *Inorg. Chem.*, 2011, **50**, 1506–1512; d) M. Yamashina, M. M. Sartin, Y. Sei, M. Akita, S. Takeuchi, T. Tahara and M. Yoshizawa, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, 2015, **137**, 9266–9269; e) M. Fujita, M. Tominaga, A. Hori and B. Therrien, *Acc. Chem. Res.*, 2005, **38**, 369–378; b) B. J. Holliday and C. A. Mirkin, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.*, 2001, **40**, 2022–2043; c) J. K. Klosterman, Y. Yamauchi and M. Fujita, *Chem. Soc. Rev.*, 2009, **38**, 1714–1725;
- A. Schmidt, A. Casini and F. E. Kühn, *Coord. Chem. Rev.*, 2014, **275**, 19–36.
- a) S. Freye, J. Hey, A. Torras-Galán, D. Stalke, R. Herbst-Irmer, M. John and G. H. Clever, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.*, 2012, **51**, 2191–2194; b) S. Freye, R. Michel, D. Stalke, M. Pawliczek, H. Frauendorf and G. H. Clever, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, 2013, **135**, 8476–8479; c) J. E. M. Lewis, E. L. Gavey, S. A. Cameron and J. D. Crowley, *Chem. Sci.*, 2012, **3**, 778–784; d) J. E. M. Lewis, C. J. McAdam, M. G. Gardiner and J. D. Crowley, *Chem. Commun.*, 2013, **49**, 3398–3400; e) S. Löffler, J. Lübbers, L. Krause, D. Stalke, B. Dittich and G. H. Clever, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, 2015, **137**, 1060–1063;
- a) A. M. Johnson, O. Moshe, A. S. Gamboa, B. W. Langloss, J. F. K. Limtiaco, C. K. Larive and R. J. Hooley, *Inorg. Chem.*, 2011, **50**, 9430–9442; b) J. E. M. Lewis, A. B. S. Elliott, C. J. McAdam, K. C. Gordon and J. D. Crowley, *Chem. Sci.*, 2014, **5**, 1833;
- Z. Li, N. Kishi, K. Yoza, M. Akita and M. Yoshizawa, *Chem. Eur. J.*, 2012, **18**, 8358–8365.
- A. Schmidt, M. Hollering, M. Drees, A. Casini and F. E. Kühn, *Dalton Trans.*, 2016, **45**, 8556–8565.
- A. B. S. Elliott, J. E. M. Lewis, H. van der Salm, C. J. McAdam, J. D. Crowley and K. C. Gordon, *Inorg. Chem.*, 2016, **55**, 3440–3447.
- a) Y. Cohen, L. Avram and L. Frish, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.*, 2005, **44**, 520–554; b) D. Li, G. Kagan, R. Hopson and P. G. Williard, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, 2009, **131**, 5627–5634.
- a) E. Jakubikova, W. Chen, D. M. Dattelbaum, F. N. Rein, R. C. Rocha, R. L. Martin, E. R. Batista, *Inorg. Chem.*, 2009, **48**, 10720–10725; b) C. Kreitner, K. Heinze, *Dalton Trans.*, 2016, **45**, 5640–5658.



A promising approach is described to enhance the luminescence of palladium(II) cages resulting in one of the highest fluorescence quantum yields for metallosupramolecular complexes.

85x39mm (600 x 600 DPI)